

# **Mojave-Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council**

Meeting Minutes  
Thursday June 14, 2007

***Bureau of Land Management (BLM) – Ely Field Office  
Ely, Nevada***

## **Meeting Attendance:**

<b>Chairperson:</b> John E. Hiatt	Wildlife
<b>Co-Chairperson:</b> Steve Mellington	Public At Large
<b>Coordinator:</b> Hillerie C. Patton	BLM Las Vegas Field Office
John Ruhs	BLM Ely Field Manager
Claire Toomey	Permitted Recreation
Juan Palma	BLM Las Vegas Field Manager
Joni Eastley	Elected Official
Skip Canfield	State Agency Representative
Gracian Uhalde	Ranching and Grazing
Craig Drake	Acting Tonopah Field Manager
Bob Maichle	Environment
Ed Higbee	Ranching and Grazing
Pat Irwin	Forest Service
Doran Sanchez	Nevada State Office
	Chief of Communication
Chris Hanefeld	Ely Field Office Communication
Jeff Weeks	Assistant Field Manager (AFM), BLM Ely Field Office
Michael Herder	Acting AFM, Ely Field Office

## **Public Present:**

No public in attendance

## **Meeting Materials:**

Persons desiring to review RAC minutes should contact Hillerie C. Patton, public affairs specialist, at (702) 515-5046.

**Chairperson, Dr. John Hiatt:** Has everyone had a chance to read the minutes? Does everyone approve the minutes?

**Skip Canfield (RAC member):** I have a suggested change...I would like to request that we list first and last names in the minutes to be more consistent.

**Chair, Hiatt** approved the meeting minutes from the March 2007 RAC meeting.

**8:00 a.m.**

**Hillierie Patton (BLM Las Vegas Field Office Public Affairs Specialist):** covered administrative matters with the group.

**Juan Palma (BLM LVFO Field Manager):** Welcomed everyone to the Ely Field Office and provided lunch and dinner suggestions.

**John Ruhs (BLM Ely Field Office Manager):** Discussed details on the BLM's 3-Tier reorganization plan. Each field office in the state has submitted draft proposals for the 3-tier concept. We are currently awaiting approval.

**Juan Palma:** The proposals are being reviewed by The BLM Nevada State and Associate State Directors. They will be submitted to the Washington Office (WO) and may be approved in August.

**Doran Sanchez (BLM Nevada State Office Chief of Communication):** We have developed an extensive communication plan for 3-tier, and the RAC will be involved in implementation as the models are approved.

**John Ruhs:** The 3-tier organizational chart is still a work in progress. In addition, the Ely Energy Center Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is also being developed.

**Juan Palma:** Displayed 3-tier maps and briefed RAC on LVFO proposal.

**Steve Mellington (RAC Co-Chairperson):** I imagine your employees are stressed with all these 3-tier changes...how are you dealing with that?

**Hillierie Patton:** We have one individual who has guided the process – Kirsten Cannon. She ensured that everyone at the LVFO has been kept informed, and she also posted the proposals and organization charts in the building.

**Steve Mellington:** What is the need for the change from 2-tier to 3-tier?

**Juan Palma:** I think the reason is consistency. Some states are using 2-tier and some are using 3-tier. Uniformity is the driving force behind the new 3-tier.

**Doran Sanchez:** I think the new 3-tier will also help to improve our customer service and help us work smarter, not harder.

**Chair:** Thank you for the briefing on 3-tier. Now, let us hear the Field Manager updates?

**John Ruhs:** Introduced Mike Herder from Ely Field Office.

**Juan Palma:** We had a Wild Horse and Burro adoption at Logandale and we will have another adoption this weekend at Horseman's Park in Las Vegas.

**Doran Sanchez:** There will be a large selection of horses and burros to choose. Everyone is invited to come by. A total of 30 horses and 10 burros are going to be offered for adoption (eight of the animals have been gentled).

**Juan Palma:** As for land sales, the Notice of Realty Action has been sent to the Washington Office to be approved for publication in the Federal Register. We will offer 168 acres (31 parcels) for sale. [In November]

**Juan Palma:** I also wanted to talk about the Dark Skies event. The promoters of the Dark Skies event believed that the permit fees were excessively high. They appealed the cost of the special recreation permit. The Interior Board of Land Appeals upheld our decision to collect cost recovery for the event.

**Joni Eastley:** On the [Environmental Impact Statement] Project Summary Report, why do the first 14 projects not have start dates?

**Juan Palma:** They actually do have start dates, but I believe they are just not listed on this specific report.

**Chair:** I have a question on Gold Butte. What is the status with the Travel Management Plan and the road inventory?

**Juan Palma:** The Travel Management Plan is done and we just need to implement it. We lost one of our rangers and that position is ready to be filled.

**Chair:** What about the road and trail closures planned...do you plan on increasing the law enforcement out there temporarily to control the situation?

**Juan Palma:** Yes, we will have Law Enforcement officers out there.

**Joni Eastley:** Pahrump had some shootings some time ago and some of the shooters were very considerate, but there was a small percentage that was not and they shot toward some homes. There is a proposal to restrict target shooting on 11,800 acres in that area.

**Juan Palma:** The public comment period just closed on the proposal. Recently, we were made aware of a Memorandum of Understanding between the BLM and 30 recreation interest groups requiring the BLM to consult with the groups prior to actions

such as shooting closures. We extended the public comment period to include these organizations. I should be making a decision in the next 30 days.

**Pat Irwin:** What are the comments from the public concerning? [Regarding the shooting closure]

**BLM staff:** Mostly the right to carry arms.

**Juan Palma:** We just hired a new ranger who will enforce the statutes on target shooting. I think we need official closure on the issue.

**Juan Palma:** At the next RAC meeting in Tonopah, I would like to talk about Alternative Energy (Table Mountain Wind Energy Project) – Hillerie will add it to the agenda.

Break

**Pat Irwin: (Forest Service Topics of Discussion)**

- 1) Grazing EIS – initial comment period is closed. Should be out in July 07.
- 2) White Mountain
- 3) Gas EIS is in progress – close to being signed
- 4) We have received no inquiries/requests to get these done
- 5) Travel Management – the Forest Service is doing an Environmental Assessment on Travel Management in Ely (must designate all roads and trails – no cross country travel allowed)
- 6) Current burn – started last fall in Nye County (4,000 acres) – will try to continue soon

**Claire Toomey (RAC Member):** Once trails are made through consistent use, it makes it harder to control Travel Management.

**Pat Irwin:** Once the map is produced, it should help to control the use of “non-designated” trails and roads.

**Chair:** It’s 11:15 a.m. and the Public Comment period is now open.

**Michael Herder:** Briefing on the Ely Resource Management Plan

- 1) Land Use Planning Handbook public comments:
  - Difficulty in readability of the draft
  - Not clear

Land Fill is now incorporated into the draft. This document went to the Nevada State Office for review and then to the WO for review/approval. We will incorporate all changes sometime in mid July, 2007. Once the public comment period has ended we will respond to all the protests and hopefully be done in 2008. Protests might be related to:

- 1) The amount of acres of treatment in the plan

- 2) The Wild Horse and Burro management areas
- 3) The Travel Management area

**Chair:** Next we will have the presentation by Field Manager Craig Drake from Tonopah.

**Craig Drake:** Handed out Renewable Resource Activities document and discussed:

- 1) Range Management – Magruder Mountain Allotment
- 2) Rangeland Health Assessments
- 3) Water Rights
- 4) Wind Energy
- 5) Wildlife
- 6) Steam Team

Skip Canfield asked Craig Drake the likelihood of a Resource Plan Amendment to designate the Monte Cristo area as suitable for disposal/R&PP. Due to recent State legislation, the sensitive area at Monte Cristo is now planned for a State park. However, the Resource Management Plan (RMP) does not show the area as suitable for disposal or for an R&PP. Craig Drake said it was not likely the RMP would be amended now, since the entire Battle Mountain District RMP is scheduled for update in 2009.

**Chair:** I've heard of something about collecting donations at Rhyolite Ghost Town for its upkeep. Doran Sanchez will look into this item and report back. [The RAC wrote a letter to the BLM Nevada State Director regarding the historic Rhyolite ghost town and inquired about the status of the response.]

**Chair:** It is 11:45 a.m. and the public comment period is now closed.

**Joni Eastley:** I have heard of visitor's complaints about a group soliciting money for the so called preservation of the town of Rhyolite.

Lunch (Restart at 1:45 p.m.)

**Chair:** Now Jack Tribble will brief us on White Pine Green Up.

**Jack Tribble:** As you know, dumping on public lands has always been a problem and we didn't know how much until we cleaned up and kept track of the cleaned up areas. I have a presentation showing pictures of the types of things people are dumping on our public lands. Taking refrigerators with freon in them to a land fill is a convoluted and inconvenient problem. We are trying to fix the process so people will stop dumping them on public lands.

- 1) We want to waive the landfill fees
- 2) We recycle tons of materials
- 3) The city of Ely is redirecting the money saved.

Does anyone have questions?

**Chair:** What do you envision in future landfill costs to the division?

**Jack Tribble:** We planned on helping with landfill fees for five years. When the price of metal is high, the program can run on its own.

**Chair:** Are cleaned up areas staying clean?

**Jack Tribble:** Yes, the areas generally stay clean.

**Hillierie Patton:** LVFO spends a lot of money on clean ups and we generally pick up about six tons of trash per event.

**Chair:** will give an update on energy.

**Jeff Weeks:** We have three Coal-Fired Power Plants in various counties. We also have nine Wind Energy projects currently in progress.

**Chair:** Next, we will be briefed by Cody Coombs on Hazardous Fuels/Fire/Restoration:

**Cody Coombs (BLM Ely Field Office):** I will pass out some documentation on our projects and then briefly talk about each of them:

- 1) 1,200 acres of prescribed burn in North Spring Valley
- 2) Clover Mountain - thinning juniper trees (1,000 acres)
- 3) Cold Springs Stewardship project (contractor project)
- 4) North Antelope Range (in the EA stage)
- 5) Upper Gleason Creek Project (prescribed burn area, 1,200 acres)
- 6) Connor Powerline Project (thinning)
- 7) Ward Mountain Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Stewardship (1,000 acres)
- 8) Kixmiller/Stewart Ranch WUI
- 9) Gleason Stewardship (57 acres)

**Chair:** Who decides how to react to a new fire? Is there a procedure to follow to decide whether it should be suppressed or treated as a WFU fire?

**John Ruhs:** Yes, there is a fire checklist that is used to determine the best procedure to follow.

**Chair:** Next are the Field Managers' Reports:

**John Ruhs:** Ely is currently having a Fire Program Review. The Cultural Program has nothing new to report. We will be having a land sale here soon. OHV Travel Management – we pulled the decision on the Lost Ox trails project this year. SNPLMA projects have been submitted for Round 8. Wilderness – 1.2 million acres of wilderness total.

**Doran Sanchez:** October 18 will not work for the Tri-RAC meeting in Eureka. You all may choose between Carson City, Winnemucca, and Ely for the location. We will reschedule the meeting for the week of Nov 5. Everyone needs to go back and look at your calendars for availability. As you know, the goal is to hold these meetings throughout the state. Please email your comments to Hillerie.

**Juan Palma:** Concerning the RAC letter – Doran will follow up the Rhyolite letter. Tonopah meeting agenda additions will be added by Hillerie.

Follow up on the new White Pine Green Up program (use at LVFO).

Please reimburse Hillerie \$3.00 for the snacks today.

We had a field trip to the fires, and we want to continue the work that has been done for the past three years (restoration of the Mojave Desert). The next meeting will be some time in August in Las Vegas.

**Craig Drake** – As far as the Beatty 40-acre land sale, an individual has filed liens against public, private, and county property to delay the sale. We just wanted to make the RAC aware of the problem.

**Hillerie:** The next RAC meeting is scheduled for August 16-17, [2007] in Tonopah. I will reserve a block of rooms for the group. The RAC Nomination packages are still at the Nevada State Office. I still need your hotel receipts. Tonight dinner is at 5:30 p.m. at the La Fiesta restaurant.

Adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

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Date

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John E. Hiatt, Chair  
Mojave-Southern Great Basin  
Resource Advisory Council

*Minutes provided by Misti Hinson, BLM Las Vegas Field Office SNPLMA Assistant*